

# BOARD OF REGENTS FOR ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION

## WORK SESSION ON GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

Monday, October 25, 2010  
2:30 – 4:30 p.m.

The Rhode Island Department of Education – Shepard Building  
5<sup>th</sup> Floor – Peter McWalters Conference Room  
255 Westminster St. – Providence, RI 02903

### MINUTES

Attending: R. Flanders, P. Guida, C. Callahan, A. Beretta, A. Cano-Morales, K. Forbes,  
B. Shimberg

The meeting convened at 2:40 p.m.

#### Review of Progress/Discussion of Student Proficiency Requirements -

RIDE staff member, Andrea Castaneda presented an overview of the discussions and decisions over the past few months regarding the graduation requirements. She introduced four foundational principles of the Secondary Regulations. Regulations should establish requirements: 1) that are credible (to all stakeholders including parents, higher education, and business); 2) rigorous (prepare students for post-secondary success); 3) accurate (based upon valid and reliable sources of evidence); and 4) comparable (across schools and districts). Additionally that the systems that result should be scalable (employs instruments and processes that can operate in LEAs of all sizes); coherent (complements and promotes other statewide educational initiatives); and feasible (to operate and can be monitored through uniform, ambitious, achievable goals).

Ms. Castaneda then outlined possible scenarios for Regents consideration. The first, an approach requested by the Regents at previous meetings, described a “Tiered Diploma System”. The proposal would allow for two diplomas, a local diploma and a Regents’ diploma. Under this plan, the LEAs would be allowed unregulated local decision-making authority to grant a local diploma (to students that complete the course requirements, the senior project/portfolio requirement, and achieve partially proficient on the ELA and Math NECAPs); and the appeals system for the granting of a Regents diploma (for students in non approved systems) would remain a local decision and not be state-managed. The Regents discussed the numbers of students currently not meeting proficiency and how those numbers might change between now and 2012. The second scenario proposed a “Transitional Tiered Diploma System”. Under this scenario, there would be different diplomas – a Regents diploma, a local diploma and a Rhode Island Diploma, which signify both student level achievement and systems approval status. There would be no state-managed appeals system (local LEAs would continue to manage the appeals process) and the state would regulate local decision-making authority to grant a Rhode Island diploma and a local diploma through the Commissioner’s Review Process.

The Regents discussed, at length, this proposal. They particularly appreciated the language in the section of the proposal that addresses students that don't reach partial proficiency on their junior year NECAP. Under this proposal, these students would be required to re-take the test in the fall of their senior year which could allow them to graduate if they showed evidence of progress. Some of the concerns expressed about this plan were that "evidence of progress" hasn't been defined yet. The group also talked at length about the Regents' diploma – if it should be based solely on reaching "proficiency" on the ELA and Mathematics NECAP or if it should be awarded to those students that perform on the NECAP "with distinction/or honors". The Regents extensively discussed the relationship between student academic achievement levels and the Diploma Systems approval status. They expressed concern about validating the level of rigor in unapproved systems and the importance of maintaining policy-level incentives to improve and expand opportunities that represent a high level of rigor and expectation in their local diploma system. Proposed changes to the regulation language will be brought to the Board for consideration at the November 4<sup>th</sup> Board meeting.

As per RIGL 42-46-5(a)(2) Pending Litigation – Stay, Hope High School, the meeting adjourned at 4:20 p.m. into Executive Session.

The meeting reconvened to open session at 4:35 p.m.

Chairman Flanders reported that during Executive Session the Regents voted unanimously to Approve the Stay, as Requested by the Providence School Committee; and to Appoint a Special Visitor to take the steps necessary to bring Hope High School into conformance with the common planning time regulations of the Board of Regents.

**MOVED AND SECONDED: THAT,** the minutes of the Executive Session be sealed.

**VOTE:** Approved Unanimously.

**Adjournment:** With unanimous consent, the meeting adjourned at 4:40 p.m.